WINTER 1945-46

SIGHT AND SOUND

VOL 14 NO 56

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VISUAL AIDS IN GERMAN SCHOOLS
NEWS FROM EASTERN EUROPE
FILM IN THE SMALL COUNTRIES
FILM SOCIETY NEWS

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT THE WORK OF FRITZ LANG

CONTRIBUTORS:

Roger Manvell
G. Buckland Smith
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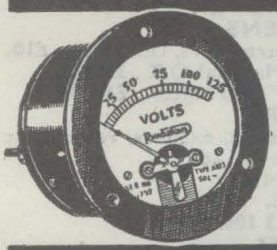

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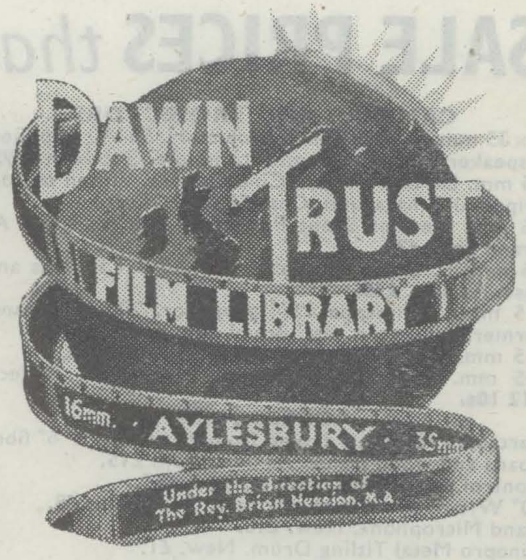

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The use of Visual Aids in German Schools

By G. BUCKLAND SMITH

THE USE of instructional films, lantern slides, and all other visual aids was widespread in German schools. Fifty per cent of the schools had film projectors, and practically every school, high school, technical school, agricultural school and University, where electricity was available, had some sort of projection equipment.

Each Kreis had its Bildstelle, usually one room in the offices of the school authority, in the charge of an enthusiastic teacher who received an honorarium for the extra work involved. Here were stored the films, lantern slides, still pictures, etc., for loan to the schools in the district. The equipment itself was kept in the schools, but other educational organisations could borrow projectors from the Kreisbildstelle. Each Stadt, or town having its own education authority, had a film library usually on a larger scale than that of the Kreis.

The Regions

At a higher level, there was a Landesbildstelle, in each Land or Province; by January 1st, 1944, there were 37 of these libraries in Greater Germany and the occupied countries. These were quite elaborate organisations originally part of the Land or Province authority but often, in later years, switched over to the authority of the Gauleiter. A Landesbildstelle was usually a large house adapted for the purpose and comprising a projection theatre, films, lantern slide, still picture, and book libraries, a workroom, repair shop, dark room, studio, and offices. Here the teachers had instruction in the use of projection apparatus, and in teaching methods; here they could see the films before using them in the schools; here they could find all the books and theses ever written on films and pictures. The Landesbildstelle also operated a replacement-repair service for projection equipment, and acted as a distributing centre for picture material to the Kreisbildstellen and, often, direct to the schools. Quite a lot of production was carried on at the Landesbildstellen too, mostly of lantern slides and stills but occasionally of films of local interest.

Sources

The Bildstellen got their supplies from a variety of sources, but mostly from a central organisation, the "Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht", or R.W.U., in Berlin. This organisation, although a private limited company, was virtually a department of the Ministry of Education and, indeed, was often officially described as such. It began in June, 1934, as the Reichstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm (R.f.d.U.) in a small house in Berlin, and its title was changed to the more exalted one of Reichsanstalt in February, 1940, at the end of which year it moved into palatial new premises in the Kleiststrasse which were formally opened February 8th, 1941, by the Nazi Minister Rust in the presence of a large gathering of Party and Army officials. The new buildings were almost wholly destroyed on November 22nd, 1943, by the R.A.F.

The President of the R.W.U. was Dr. Phil. Dr. Med. Kurt Gauger, who was also a Gauarzt of the S.A. and the Volkssturm. There was a Governing Committee representing education authorities, etc., of which the Chairman was Dr. Kurt Zierold, a Minister-

ialrat of the Ministry of Education. The Committee only met on a few occasions, but there is no doubt that Dr. Zierold, himself, exercised a considerable influence over the activities of the R.W.U. He was a schoolboy friend of Dr. Gauger, and of Becker, Minister of Education in Germany in 1930, through whose influence Zierold obtained a post at the Ministry. He remained in the Ministry under Dr. Grimme, Minister of Education 1930–33, and, though he was never a member of the Party, he contrived to remain there under Rust. Dr. Grimme is now head of the education department of the Province of Hanover, and Zierold is working under him. Gauger is now in captivity and a large proportion of the R.W.U. is dispersed throughout the country, but what is left continues to function in the American zone in Berlin under Professor Casselmann, formerly assistant to Dr. Gauger. Lotte Rheiniger, whose silhouette films are well known in Britain, is also there making silhouette films of German fairy tales for use in junior schools.

Finance

The financing of this country-wide organisation was achieved in a typical German fashion. A levy, Lernmittelbeitrag, of 80 Rpf. a year was imposed on every child, with certain exceptions, in those schools using visual aids. This amounted to quite a considerable sum of money paid to the account of the R.W.U. Pupils of trade schools and University students paid 2 RM. a year. Ten per cent of the money collected in each district was paid back to provide the running expenses of the Bildstellen and a further 50 per cent was refunded in the form of projection equipment and projection material. This still left an adequate amount for the expenses of the R.W.U. Schools contributing the Lernmittelbeitrag were entitled to projection equipment free according to the amount they had contributed and to borrow free of charge films, slides, etc., from the local Kreisbildstelle. The organisation, as such, was ideal.

No Propaganda

It can be imagined how keen the Nazis were on using this organisation for propaganda purposes but they were not altogether successful. Goebbels, at the Ministry of Propaganda, had a representative on the governing body of the R.W.U., but since this met so infrequently his opinions carried little weight. The R.W.U. was saved in that, although functioning as a department of the Ministry of Education, it was in fact a private body. So much was this the case, in fact, that when the Nazis began using films for propaganda in real earnest, they found it necessary to establish an entirely separate organisation of Gaufilmstellen and Kreisfilmstellen parallel to that of the schools. It is true that, in several cases, the Gaufilmstelle was in the same premises as the Landesbildstelle and the two bodies worked together, but this was not always so.

Goebbels exercised a tight control over the theatrical film and sound film production in which a few firms held a monopoly in Germany. It is significant, however, that the R.W.U. clung to silent films. Had they developed the use of sound films in schools, as we did in Britain, they must inevitably have come under the yoke of the Ministry of Propaganda.

Indeed, it is surprising how few of the R.W.U. films are Party films, for it must have been difficult in the last twelve years in Germany to make a film which was not, even indirectly, Party propaganda. But, of course, a great deal of the propaganda value of a silent film depends on the commentary given to it by the teacher.

The R.W.U. distributed some 300 films for elementary schools, 90 odd films for trade schools, 30 for agricultural schools, and nearly 500 for

high schools and universities. In addition it distributed lantern slides, many of which are blatant propaganda, gramophone records, and other aids, for example a complete course on the reading of aerial photographs, beautifully prepared and with a huge amount of picture material provided free by the Air Ministry, which was compulsory in all schools. Still films or film strips were not liked by the R.W.U. and their use in schools was not encouraged if not actually forbidden.

There is a lot more to be said, when more information is collected. about the use of films in German schools, teaching methods, and so on, but the whole subject cannot be dealt with in one article.

The Control Commission for Germany is keen on promoting the use of visual aids. At the present time with the shortage of teachers and of textbooks, the film and the lantern slide are invaluable and the huge task of examining all German instructional films, lantern slides, and other visual aids is being hurried through to make as many as possible available for use.

Authority has just been given for the establishment in the British zone of a German Film Institute to carry on the work of the R.W.U. This Institute will work, for the time being, under the direct control of the Education Branch of the Control Commission, and will be used to purge from the existing films, etc., all Nazi, militaristic, and other objectionable ideas.

In addition, a collection is being made of all German instructional films and visual aids for transmission to London, where a more detached and leisurely study can be made of them than is possible in the difficult circumstances which still prevail in Germany. It is hoped that these will eventually be available in the National Film Library to all students of the educational film. It is possible, too, that copies of many of them may be made for presentation to the countries of Europe whose own instructional films were destroyed during the German occupation.

DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET CINEMA

By Catherine de la Roche

LONDONERS will soon see Professor Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*, "the first experiment in cinematic tragedy", as a Soviet critic calls it. This film, though started before the Soviet Union's entry into the war, is characteristic of the latest phase in the 26 years' evolution of the Soviet cinema. The war was an interruption and in some ways a stimulation to film production, which was immediately devoted in its entirety to the nation's war effort. But the trends in creative thought which had already taken shape in the latter 1930s have remained essentially the same.

Their roots are to be found in the earliest days, when Lenin indicated the place films would hold in the people's life by calling the cinema the most important of all the arts for the new Soviet State. The silent films dealt with historical events or sociological problems connected with the Revolution in a variety of tentative styles which were all dominated by the documentary approach, but one principle was established from the outset, never to be departed from: egotistical individualism was banished from all Soviet art, and only those stories, characters and ideas which had some

meaning for society as a whole were filmed.

In those days, too, the close link between the broad public and film production was established through the great amount of filming on the actual locations of events. In Eisenstein's *October* or Pudovkin's *Storm over Asia*, the crowd was the hero, the characters natural types found in their own surroundings. Then as now general interest in a film commenced with its production and was maintained by the widest publicity in numerous publications.

National Themes

The construction of studios in all the national republics during the first two Five Year Plans brought the cinema closer still to the people, and made possible the creation of films which in Stalin's words, are "national in form and socialist in content". At the end of the silent film days Dovzhenko, work-in Kiev, made *Arsenal* and *Earth*, which are nothing less than film poems of his native Ukraine. Soon pictures on national themes, either historical or contemporary and always remarkably distinctive in style, were produced in other national republics. Among them was *Russia*.

Soon after the advent of sound films the problem of characterisation began coming to the fore. Referring to this period the critic I. F. Popov wrote: "It is in the masterly representation of the masses that the key to the creation of separate characters can be found, just as the most profound portrayal of an individuality strengthens the representation of the masses." The time had come to define the new hero living in a completely new society, to create film characterisations of individuals with personal conflicts within the life of society, the men and women active in the huge construction drives of the Five Year Plans. But the characters in the early talking films, as in all the silent films, represented types. Their name was legion, their features were drawn in strong colours without halftones, they were legendary figures in films that often told their tale with the rhythm and symbolism of a popular legend, but they had little individuality.

Towards the end of the second Five Year Plan, when the new generation, product of the Soviet State, was growing up, the need to interpret the new reality was voiced more strongly than ever. Story construction now acquired all the features of the fable, and Gerassimov's *The New Teacher* is a typical example of a successful film of this kind. However, right until the outbreak of war, there were few outstanding pictures of contemporary life, while brilliant films on historical or biographical subjects had followed each other in quick succession, and in them characterisations of high order abounded. A number of them have been seen in London: Dovzhenko's *Schors*, Petrov's *Peter I*, Donskoi's *My Universities*, and many others.

The New Man

Meanwhile the range of subjects and styles had broadened. There were adventure stories from the Children's Studios (*Lone White Sail*), puppet films (*The New Gulliver*), cartoon films, musical comedy, phantasy, satire and, a most important department, magnificent scientific and technical films. Standards were constantly being raised, earnest good intentions were not enough and the test of a good film was that it should hold the public's interest throughout. "Can you imagine anyone saying seriously," asks I. P. Popov, "this is an unentertaining good work of art?"

When war broke out the aim of the cinema was to "depict the greatness of the period and help in the moral, political and military defeat of Fascism" (I. Bolshakov, Chairman of the All-Union Cinema Committee). In a sense, the past development of the

Soviet cinema was epitomised in the wartime films. The grand-scale documentary was revived with famous feature film directors in charge of productions as in the early days. Symbolical figures became the heroes of fiction films about the Red Army, partisans or munition workers. Only later in the war the image of the "new man", brought into sharp relief by the exigencies of war, was successfully brought to the screen in a few films. Gerassimov's *Mainland* about a munition plant in the Urals is one of these. The heroine, whose husband is at the front, is "a woman of great inward passion, perseverance and modesty, outwardly calm and gay. She works hard, without any fuss. She does not show her suffering: the weak are proud of suffering, the strong are proud of how they conquer it". The director of the factory is "a man of strong character, broad mind, hard principles, implacable. A great organiser and political worker, slightly ironical, quick in making decisions—a broad personality". The film is typical of the producer's work in which he seeks to "present the inward poetry of life and looks for it in the events of our everyday life". ("Literatura i Iskustvo.") But critics were not satisfied with the presentation of personalities in the majority of films on contemporary life. The biographical film *Zoya* by Arnstam, an "optimistic tragedy" about the partisan girl of 16 who was hanged by the Germans, goes a long way in using the many potentialities of the cinema, inserting documentary scenes, for example, in order to show human beings as the product of their time. But in spite of its merits and success in the U.S.S.R. *Novi Mir* criticised the characterisation of the heroine because "one cannot see how she differs from her companions".

Stress on national patriotism in the films set in the fighting zones of Russia and Ukraine was, naturally, heightened during the war, no doubt partly as a reaction against the theories of "Mein Kampf", which rated Slavs as inferior by virtue of being Slav, and because of the deliberate degradation of the peoples in the occupied republics who would, on liberation, need every aid in the colossal task of moral and psychological rehabilitation. There is nothing new in the re-interpretation of national history. Some of the best pre-war pictures like Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* had excelled in this. During the war the Georgian producer Chiaureli, made *Georgil Saakadze*, the second in a series on Georgian history, and the outstanding one among the new historical and biographical films is, of course, Part I of Eisenstein's serial film on *Ivan the Terrible*.

Vitality and Enthusiasm

It sheds a new light on the depth, passion and complexity of the unhappy Czar's character, a progressive man of his time, unifier of Russia and the first to develop the idea of a centralised State. The battle of powerful forces and characters is built up on the background of the renaissance in Russian culture, with its monumental architecture, great music and painting. It is "a symbolic picture, romantic in conception . . . and has attained unity in various methods of expression". (*Izvestia.*)

There is great vitality and enthusiasm in the Soviet film world. Before the war was over a separate script studio was opened to encourage the creation of better scenarios. Comedy script competitions are held because the film people are dissatisfied with the quality of their comedies. New methods are always being explored.

The current production schedule includes a greater variety of *genres* than ever. The U.S.S.R., too, intends to show its films all over the world—and considering the way the Soviet cinema is developing, it seems that they will find a growing audience.

Film in the Small Countries

A Book Review

By Roger Manvell

LIAM O'LAOGHAIRE has written a book of more than local or national interest.* The film is an international art. Its ready realism makes it an outstanding medium through which the ordinary untravelled people of the various countries of the world can meet each other with all the intimacy of the camera's mobility in and out of the affairs of men. Unfortunately, the production and exhibition of films shows no corresponding width. America occupies 65 per cent of the world's exhibition time. The films of countries like India, China, Egypt (for the Arabic speaking world), Argentina and Mexico have become curiosities outside their own locality. Britain, one of the most film-conscious of countries in the world, with an annual commercial audience of over 1,300 million and an annual non-theatrical audience of some 20 million, still subsists 85 per cent of the time on Hollywood whose regionalism and specialisation of taste in entertainment are notorious. In London it is indeed possible to see the products of countries like Russia and France, and on very rare occasions Czechoslovakia and Sweden. Only in non-theatrical does the range widen a little to include foreign-produced documentary.

Authors like Mr. O'Laoghaire can help us in a film-ridden country like Britain to fill in the picture of conditions elsewhere, for most of the countries of the world are small like Ireland and face the problems of not being film producers for the most part. Where they have cinemas (and most countries possess them by now) their screens are normally dominated by Hollywood. They find little chance there for national self-expression owing to the expense of film production.

Finance

Although the Swedish producers make films (as Mr. O'Laoghaire points out) for as little as £15,000 each, and the Czechs for as little, pre-war, as £7,000, in Britain our pictures cost over £100,000, whilst in America $500,000 is the normal minimum price for a film not intended solely for what is called the "nabe market". But the Swedish and Czech films, unfortunately, cannot be expected to please the taste of people in countries where audiences have been educated to think that any film that does not *look* as if it cost a million dollars is an insult to their purchasing power. That is the tragedy of over-provision of one type of film at the expense of any of the others.

Mr. O'Laoghaire's excellent book underlines the moral of all this. He himself has a lively mind for cinema and he should obviously be producing Irish feature and documentary films for exhibition at home and overseas. But, as he points out, the Irish exhibition-market can only gross £5,000 for a successful film. (The figure for Britain is about £300,000.) Without a foreign market (which, for instance, enables Egypt to spend as much as £50,000 on an Arabic production) how can an Irish film production industry be set up? In his last chapters Mr. O'Laoghaire discusses the problem on

* *Invitation to the Film.* Liam O'Laoghaire. Tralee: The Kerryman Limited. 1945. 7*s.* 6*d.*

the basis that good Irish feature films could be made for £20,000 each provided a State scheme for studio construction and training of studio personnel could be created: the initial cost of the scheme would be approximately £100,000. Documentary and Instructional films could also be made by the studios. It is interesting to compare the need felt by Mr. O'Laoghaire for Irish national self-expression on the screen with that by Mr. Norman Wilson on behalf of Scotland in his book, "Presenting Scotland", published a year ago. Recently Captain Bouman of Holland, who produced films for the Resistance Movement during the occupation of the Netherlands, told me the same thing about Dutch film production in the future, though he felt Holland should concentrate on making documentary films, which is what Mr. Wilson thinks should be the case in Scotland.

"Invitation to the Film" gives a brief history of European and American cinema which shows a wide knowledge of the old and new in films. In the next section he surveys the nature and technique of the medium under the heading of Craftsmanship, and reveals considerable technical knowledge of film production and apparatus. He then turns to Documentary with special and important reference to Irish production in which he himself has played a considerable part. After this he makes an intelligent survey of the amateur film, and of the use of the film for instruction in schools. This is one of the longest and one of the best sections, as is the last on "Towards an Irish Film". The book has a bibliography and a glossary of film terms, and a large number of illustrations drawn from a wide range of national sources.

The book says little that is new but that is scarcely its purpose. What it succeeds in doing is fulfilling its title. It is well written, and it is unfortunate that the most sketchy section, that on the history of the film, comes first. It is full of titles of films which cannot be adequately described and is likely to put off the general reader for whom the book is intended and who will probably never have heard of more than a few of the films mentioned. The technical section, too, may outpace the resources of a general reader uninterested in technical matters (which is the case with so many general readers), whereas the informed know the material anyhow. It is on peculiarly Irish problems that Mr. O'Laoghaire is at his best, but the book can, with these few reservations, be recommended to all people who need an introduction to the whole subject of cinema. It is an admirable survey for the price in these post-war days of wartime stringencies.

SCANNAN

A WELCOME newcomer to the ranks of film publications is *Scannan* (Film), the monthly journal of the Portlaoighise Film Society. The first issue, which is duplicated, contains articles by Colm O'Laoghaire, Charles Whelan, F. E. W. Hackett and Liam O'Laoghaire among others. The subscription for the six monthly issues of the season is two shillings, from 30 Borris Road, Portlaoighise, Eire.

Theatre

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It is pleasant to come across a paper where such a galaxy of writers, who really do know their own special subject, have expressed themselves intelligently and descriptively about the scenic arts, whether visual or aural, British or international.

A good magazine, but might I suggest that it could be improved by a more careful reading of proofs?

B. J. M.

Behind "The Iron Curtain"

News from Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland

By H. H. Wollenberg

HUNGARY, the country of origin of so many internationally known directors and artists, during her affiliation with Nazi-Germany claimed third place in European film production. Her new, sound aim is quality instead of quantity. This indicates a process of recovery which, although slow and gradual, is well under way.

The scrapping of all the former anti-liberal and undemocratic regulations was a matter of course after the collapse. What matters more are the foundations laid by the new administration. A new Film Censorship has, for instance, been established since August last, formed of writers, journalists and directors. The intellectual element is prevalent.

Scrapped, too, were the former trade associations. Instead, two new big organisations have been formed: the Union of the Employees and the Hungarian Film Industry Association; both co-operate on most friendly terms.

Film College

Another noteworthy augury is the Film College for the establishment of which a special licence was granted by the Government. At present, 120 students are being trained in the various scientific aspects of kinematography. Its principal is Victor Gertler, a former assistant of Eric Pommer.

Gertler is, at the same time, chief of the Hunnia Film Fabrik, one of the two existing film production concerns. The gifted director, after many years of suffering and persecution, has thus, at last, gained a highly responsible position.

Production Soon

The other principal concern is "Mafirt" (Ungarische Filmindustrie A.G.). It has taken over the premises of the former Hungarian Film Bureau. Head of Mafirt studios is Akusius Hamza, who, after many years spent in Paris, played a prominent part in the Hungarian resistance movement during the last years.

Both companies, Hunnia and Mafirt studios, are expected to start production in the very near future. Lack of equipment has been the cause of much delay and trouble, for the studios were stripped by the Germans before their departure.

In the meantime, Mafirt have already made a start by producing the new Hungarian Weekly Newsreel, a remarkable effort in this line, which compares well with the Russian and American newsreels distributed in Hungary.

It should be realised that there is no question of the Hungarian film industry being nationalised; branches of the principal American film companies distribute their films on a commercial basis as do the Hungarian renters.

* * *

BULGARIA

Even in this small country, an effort has recently been made in the way of film production. The first Bulgarian film under this country's new régime has been released. Its title is *Better Days will be Coming*, showing in its leading rôle Mr. Assen Kambourov, that great comedian of the National

Theatre, Sofia. Its story is of merely national interest but its technical qualities show a remarkable standard.

This is a beginning, anyway, and the Government are encouraging the young Bulgarian film effort by establishing a Film Company; the Russians will place their great experience at its disposal.

* * *

POLAND

No other country has suffered so great an ordeal of protracted occupation, annihilation, disruption, and actual warfare as has Poland. It is amazing to see from those scanty reports reaching the world at large, that an ambitious film effort, although in its preliminary stage yet, is to play a considerable part within the national reconstruction schemes.

After the liberation, under those appalling circumstances, there was no other course to take but nationalisation of what had remained of the Polish film industry; no private initiative, even aided by the State, would have been able to carry on among the ruins. Thus, all activities, whether exhibition or distribution or production, have been transferred to the state-owned "Film Polski" organisation.

Rapid Achievement

Great progress has been made since; here are some of Film Polski's achievements and further plans:—

While the Germans had left no studio in working condition, one studio is ready for shooting at Warsaw now; another is under construction there, a third being already operating at Lodz.

A film laboratory up to the most modern standard, equipped by Multiplex-Debrie, functions at Warsaw.

Poland has started producing her own film stock.

Education, instructional and documentary production has been taken up. A good many reels have already been released.

Production of feature films is well in its preparatory phase.

A scientific centre has been established for the specific purpose of encouraging instructional and documentary production and furnishing financial and technical assistance.

Novel Methods

An especially interesting feature of the novel methods as applied by "Film Polski" is that, after completion, every film is examined by a body of specialists, and every achievement is awarded by a rise of the respective technician's monthly salary.

Most characteristic of Poland's enthusiastic film effort is an ambitious plan for the construction of a "Film City" in the neighbourhood of Warsaw, with six studios, laboratories, accommodation for all members of the production units, etc. The scheme has already been adopted.

Determination

All this clearly indicates Poland's determination of playing a major and very active part in the international film sphere; there is, no doubt, plenty of talent to draw on in the Polish people.

The Cinémathèque Française has undertaken to organise a Films Exhibition at Cracow as a Franco–Polish manifestation.

The creation of a Polish Film Institute is envisaged with a view to training highly skilled Polish artists, technicians, script writers and so forth.

A very limited number of new subscriptions can now be received for the MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN *of the British Film Institute (Subscription 7s. 6d. per annum post free).*

DECADENCE AND D.T.s

An American Letter from Herman G. Weinberg

YOU WOULD think that after five years of war, the world would have had its fill of violence, yet among other manifestations of it during the past quarter have been a half-dozen interesting films from Hollywood, France and Italy, all violent. To be sure the French film, *Goupi Mains Rouges*, actually dates from 1942, but as it has just reached here, it falls neatly into the current tendency. The sixth, the still as yet unreleased *Scarlet City* of Fritz Lang, will have to wait until the next issue of SIGHT AND SOUND for review. But from a perusal of its scenario in the writer's *Index to the Creative Work of Fritz Lang*, issued as a supplement to this number, it bids fair to equal in ferocity the other five. In each case the violence is a result of some psychopathological quirk on the part of the protagonist. The cinema is going in for aberrations in a big way. These are jaded times. Even crime, as well as sex, must be "gamey" (the French have a word for it—*faisandé*) to stir our interest. Or so the producers think. Perhaps it is *they* who are getting overripe. Is there really present the decadence all this might mean? I haven't thought about it enough to decide for myself.

Gestapo Torture

At any rate, *The Open City*, filmed in Italy, is not decadent, though some of the scenes of Gestapo torture are almost cynical in the depravity exhibited by the Nazi protagonists in it. Filmed with a sort of cold, blind fury, it shows how the German and Italian fascists hunted down members of the underground resistance during the occupation of Rome. As a film it is crudely put together but its sincerity is so unquestionable and springs from such deep wells of human pity that it succeeds at moments in touching the very deepest recesses of the human psyche. It is, of course, a moot point as to what the depiction of cruelty, pain and suffering has necessarily to do with art (or is anybody still interested in "art" in the cinema?)—but few films have had the power to put you through a "wringer" like this one does, leaving you limp and emotionally battered at its conclusion. Still, I don't see any other way to make an anti-Nazi film so that its lesson will be learned.

Icy and Macabre

Goupi Mains Rouges is more subtly made, as it would be, being French. A former assistant of Renoir, Jacques Becker, guided the players through a scenario by Pierre Very that is full of icy and macabre humour. On the surface it is a study of a family of avaricious peasants whose avarice is justified as a virtue. A sou is a sou. Beneath that, it poses some eternal verities in microcosm. The unfortunate Le Vigan gives another of his unforgettable paroxysmic performances as an ex-Colonial soldier whose memories of the clangour of life in Tonkin makes him bitter and contemptuous of his provincial relatives and their insufferable "a sou is a sou".

Of the Hollywood films, one is good enough to be mentioned in the same breath with these two—*The Lost Weekend*. It is almost purely a clinical study of an alcoholic (dipsomaniac is the word, I think) who has taken to drink because of his frustrated ambition to be a writer. Whatever the cause (I understand that in the book by Charles Jackson, his frustration is

more biological, but let it pass)—here the case history of four days in the life of a man who is sick is bared before the embarrassed gaze of the spectator with such realism that once or twice it will make you break out into a cold sweat. Von Stroheim (who seems to have ante-dated everyone with his memorable pioneer work in his early films) had a scene depicting *delirium tremens* in the beginning of *Greed*, but it was cut out. It took exactly twenty years to put such a scene on the screen again—and from the standpoint of an edifying spectacle, I hope it will take another twenty years before it happens again.

Spellbound is not Alfred Hitchcock at his cool best, but it has interesting things in it. Its chief fault is its artificiality, you don't believe a moment of it, but its trick scenario that follows a man trying to find out what it is that is troubling him until he does find out has its suspense. If it were less slick, less sophisticated, it might have moved us more as another case history of a sick man, but genuine emotional content was sacrificed for camera tricks and Dali-esque nightmares and the vaudeville professor of Michael Chekov.

On the same level, Rene Clair's *And Then There Were None* has its own share of suspense, though there is but one moment in the entire film that is pure Clair—the rest being as competent a transfilming of Agatha Christie's murder mystery, *Ten Little Niggers*, as any half-dozen far less talented directors than Clair would have made out of it. It is a real pity to see so fine an actor as Barry Fitzgerald being wasted on films of this kind, as it is, for that matter, to see a director like Clair similarly wasted. Even Castelnuovo-Tedesco's score for the film sounds like Respighi's *Fountains of Rome*. In short, none of those so specially gifted are themselves in this film—but it *will* keep you guessing and I suppose that was its only *raison d'être*, so what am I quibbling about?

Film Critics and Criticism

By F. E. PARDOE

IT IS ONLY by consistently and carefully reading film criticism that the ordinary person, interested in the cinema but not professionally concerned with it, can hope to keep abreast of its development. Some thirty or more entertainment films and many others of different categories are listed in each issue of the *Monthly Film Bulletin* and no one can hope to see all of them. The only course to pursue therefore is to read all the notices of new films which are available and to make a point of seeing those that appear to offer anything of value, either aesthetic or technical. One soon becomes reconciled to the extraordinary divergence of views expressed by the various critics who necessarily have to reflect to a considerable degree the policy of the newspaper or periodical in which they write and to consider the section of the public to which the paper appeals. Also one soon learns to make allowances for the critic's personal predilections and views which prejudice his or her opinion on any given film. It is, for example, quite obvious that a critic who believes the cinema to be an important art-form is certain to review a film differently from a critic whose only concern is whether the film under consideration provides entertainment for the unthinking. By a judicious process of comparison between reviews and between these and one's own reactions to various

films it quickly becomes apparent which critics are to be relied on or which have criteria approximating to one's own.

Increasing Tendency

There is, however, one drawback to this scheme of film-going which is becoming increasingly apparent. That is the tendency of all critics, even those who are seriously interested in the cinema, to over-estimate the value of some films. This can be attributed in most instances to the common practice of choosing one film—the most outstanding in the writer's opinion of the films under review—and devoting the majority of the article to it, dismissing the other films with a short, usually scathing, comment. This practice is wholly to be praised on the rare occasions when there is one outstanding film among the releases, but it leads to abuse when the films are of a uniform standard of either goodness or badness. In the former case the practice leads to good films being almost completely ignored and in the second to a bad film being elevated to a quite undeserved position. A contributing factor to this practice is the fact that a critic has usually a settled amount of column space to fill in the paper or periodical and that, whether the films warrant it or not, a definite number of words have to be written about them.

The other reason for the over-estimating of many films is chiefly concerned with standards of judgment and in discussing these one is immediately on very dangerous and controversial ground as, necessarily, no fixed standards exist by which a film can be judged. The only standards which do exist are those which one has developed for oneself over a period by seeing films and, as it were, filing for reference in the mind those aspects of the film which have been outstanding. This dependence on memory is peculiar to the stage and cinema alone of all the arts, for in all other forms the result of the artist's work is permanent and can usually be consulted again and again as a foot-rule by which to measure subsequent works. This utter dependence on visual memory is certainly the greatest obstacle in any attempt to reach a uniform high standard of reliable film criticism. The other obstacle is the number of films the professional critics have to see—probably twenty or more in each month. Gradually this series of third or fourth-rate films must lower their standards of judgment, their memory of the first-rate films they have seen must become blurred and the consequence is that when they see a film which is only a little better than the very poor average, they hail it as a near-masterpiece and strongly recommend it to their readers, who go to their local cinemas and are disappointed. This happens because they have higher standards than the critics. Such a remarkable state of affairs has come about because they see probably less than a tenth of the films that the critic sees and only such films as are worth seeing.

Clearly Intolerable

This position is clearly intolerable and the issue is fundamental to the serious student of the cinema. It would seem therefore that some scheme of "revision of the classics" is called for in order to keep fresh the memory of the great films of the past in the minds of those who are, after all, the leaders of opinion in the cinema. Similarly, too, it would seem to suggest that film critics should be chosen for their interest in and knowledge of the cinema rather than their journalistic ability, and should undergo a course of training which should consist of seeing all the great films they can and not, as seems to be the case at the moment, of seeing a long series of third- or fourth-rate examples of the art in which they are supposed to be expert.

"SO I WENT TO A DOCTOR"

O. Henry's classic opening to a short story provides a text for TONY ROSE, who thinks more attention should be paid to the beginning of films . . .

H. E. BATES, in his book, "The Modern Short Story", expresses the opinion that O. Henry has been praised inordinately for the endings of his stories while the greater craftsmanship of his openings has been ignored. A similar tendency exists in the cinema. There is much talk of how a film ends: "I liked the ending" or "I was disappointed in the ending", never "I was disappointed in the beginning".

This lack of proportion even extends to producers. Some, with a wary eye on the box-office, have been known to make alternative endings, one sad and one happy, like strawberry and vanilla to suit every taste. From the point of view of art, or perhaps better, craft, this is patently ridiculous. For every story has an ending which is implicit in it. As soon as a writer has thought of an idea for a story, he has thought of an ending. The one cannot exist without the other; change the ending and you change the idea.

But the beginning; that comes a long time after. It is not a matter of compulsion but of taste and choice—very often, of nerve-racking doubt and hesitation. Whether to plunge into the centre of the battle and then withdraw to a safer position, whether to make a dummy attack while the main forces are being marshalled elsewhere or whether to fire off a victory salvo before the fighting begins. This last method, known as the flash-back, is a popular one in the cinema. It has served musical-comedy, drama, tragedy—everything from *Maytime* to *Citizen Kane*, from *Double Indemnity* to *In Which We Serve*.

Its popularity is well founded for to return to the point of departure is like the scribing of a circle. It brings with it a satisfying sense of completion. The film, moreover, is a medium well adapted to the free use of time—one of its greatest advantages over the theatre.

Flash-backs

Flash-backs, on the other hand, often entail the services of a narrator—a definitely non-cinematic creature. Remember the elaborate efforts to keep him mobile in *The Moon and Sixpence*? They avoided him partially in *Citizen Kane* by having a newshound enquiring into Kane's past life. But whether he be a yokel in a village pub "telling the story" for the price of a pint or an aged housekeeper unburdening her soul to a new tenant, one cannot escape the feeling that he is little better than the equivalent of a programme note. The more he is camouflaged, the more irksome is his presence.

The short story writer has learned that he cannot afford much explanation. The reader must be left to discover, as he goes along, who is married to whom and how they all come to be sitting in a coffee-stall in the middle of the Texan desert. Since a film takes about the same time to run as a short story does to read, there would seem to be grounds for comparison.

Returning to O. Henry, we find that some of his best pieces start with a colourful passage of dialogue. The one Bates quotes is: "So I went to a Doctor. 'How long has it been since you took any alcohol into your system?' he

asked." Something bizarre, "intriguing"; it may have only a tenuous connection with what follows. That doesn't matter; the reader's attention has been captured; he has "bought" the story. This type of salesmanship, whose best living exponent is probably William Saroyan, loses its value when applied to the film.

A member of a cinema audience doesn't need to be beckoned and cajoled into seeing the show through. The surrounding darkness and the fact that he has already put down his money at the box-office predisposes him to attentiveness. On the contrary, a film which opened with a swift exchange of dialogue would probably shock and antagonise him. He needs, first of all, to have his mind wiped clear of all the impressions left upon it by the newsreel or his own thoughts before he came in.

There is much to be said for the long-shot of, say, rolling countryside, a street, the sea; just a simple, easily digestible picture to let us know where we are.

Alarm and Despondency

The camera's eye running down the side of the skyscraper and finishing up in the sordid street, from which *Dead End* took its name, could not have been bettered in this respect. A scene which depicts the comedian falling down or the heroine being carried up a staircase is rendered doubly effective if the stairs appear on their own first. The elementary psychology behind this was ignored in *Out of this World*, which opened in the middle of the female dance band's rehearsal. Thus swing fans were robbed of the pleasure of anticipation, while the rest of us were plunged into a state of alarm and despondency which a much better film could not easily have dispelled.

To omit action and, above all, noise, is not to lose significance. Much can be done with mere light and shadow to suggest not only time and place, but atmosphere. Our mood can be transformed to one of gaiety or eeriness before a word is spoken, or a step taken. Examine, for instance, the first few feet of that excellently constructed film, *Laura*. The detective is waiting in the empty hall for an interview with the exquisite and self-glorified journalist, Waldo Laidecker. We learn much of Laidecker's fastidiousness and aesthetic vanity from that polished floor and those glass cabinets of "*objets d'art*" before we are admitted, with the detective, to his presence. We feel, too, in that silence, the detective's suppressed impatience.

Let There be Silence

Harking back a few years; *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, a film of a very different calibre, succeeded in creating an emotional atmosphere before a single character was seen. We came to the sick room of Elizabeth Barrett by following her white spaniel down the dark corridor. True, speech was used: the voice of Charles Laughton as Mr. Barrett, is heard saying grace at the family dining table. This, however, was not speech as speech but as a ritiualistic sound accompaniment. A comparable effect can be obtained from dialogue which is whispered so that the words are indistinguishable or by speech in a foreign language.

Doubtless there are many variations of technique, already exploited or awaiting discovery. All seem, in some way, dependant on restraint. There must be a promise of something which is withheld. This applies even to the cast, for few of us can help experiencing a twinge of dissatisfaction if the first character to appear on the screen is the star.

Let the movie-makers, then, consider well how to begin, that we may experience more often the immediate sense of seeing a film which is real cinema; which, like the short story, has a beginning, a middle and an end. And in the beginning let there be silence.

THE TYNESIDE CINEMA APPRECIATION CLUB

By C. J. Hawley

ALTHOUGH many Youth Organisations and Adult Education groups are now taking an interest in Film Appreciation and organising discussion groups, I believe that the Tyneside Cinema Appreciation Club is the first club of its kind to be formed solely for the purpose of discussing and criticising the better type of film shown commercially. We are a group of ordinary cinema-goers, unattached to any educational or cultural body, who have banded together to see what we can do about the deplorable quality of average commercial film, and the lack of attention in our area to the showing of less popular but artistically better films. The aims of the club, as outlined in the Constitution, are as follows:—

(*a*) To discuss and criticise the commercial films shown on Tyneside and to select films worthy of support.

(*b*) To encourage discrimination in the cinema.

(*c*) To safeguard the interests of cinema-goers with regard to the cutting of films, the changing of advertised programmes, etc.

(*d*) To enable members to learn more about the technical and artistic side of the cinema by the introduction of expert speakers.

(*e*) To promote fellowship among members.

(*f*) To support any attempt to show artistic films on Tyneside.

The club has now been active for some four months, and during this time we have discussed twelve or so feature films, including *Henry V*, *The Way to the Stars*, *Waterloo Road*, and several of the better Hollywood offerings; we have sent lists of films our members would like to see shown to local cinema managers, with some success, and on the whole we have made quite a number of people realise that there is more to the cinema than just a pleasant evening out.

Now for the future. During 1946 we plan to increase our membership as much as we can, first by widespread advertisement in cinemas and libraries, and wherever else we can get our posters shown, and secondly by arranging social events, rambles, film quizzes and so on, to attract the less serious-minded type of cinema-goer. We plan to have two serious meetings per month, one, a discussion on the three best films shown locally (we insist on discussing only the best films, because otherwise it would mean our members going to see, and hence "supporting" bad films); the other, a talk on Film Appreciation, either by a member of the committee, or by any actor, director, critic or film technician who is willing to come. In addition we will help our local film societies in any way we can, and keep a watchful eye on the interests of the cultural cinema.

Great Possibilities

The potentialities of the club are great. How much greater they would be if an association of such clubs, up and down the country, could be formed. A League of Cinema-goers, which, with a sufficiently large number of members, could have a direct bearing on the type and quality of films made in this country. In each big town a club could be formed, either by an existing film society, or as in our case, by a

small group of people, sufficiently enthusiastic. All that is needed at the start is a meeting place (any church hall or public room will do), and enough money to pay for the hire of it. After that the club will pay for itself through members' subscriptions. With such a League, a panel of lecturers could be formed, and perhaps a journal published to which each individual club could contribute.

The great advantage of clubs like this over Film Societies is that even the most fervent Betty Grable fan might be attracted by the programme of social events and the friendly club atmosphere. Then · perhaps later, through the discussions and talks, they may come to learn to distinguish between good and bad in the cinema. The pill is sugared and may be taken willingly. There are the would-be serious cinema-goers, those who sincerely believe that *Mrs. Parkington*, and *Murder in Thornton Square* are the best that the cinema can offer, and who would be only too anxious to find out why Welles is a better director than Garnett, and Renoir than Cukor.

For those who would start a club of this sort there are dangers to watch. Don't get too technical at first. Don't form an intellectual clique, and exclude the less knowledgeable members in discussions. Let everyone have his say, but do not bring anyone into the limelight if they do not wish to talk.

With a number of clubs much can be done. The present state of affairs cannot go on, if the cinema is to remain and flourish as a cultural medium. With vast queues for *Madonna of the Seven Moons*, *The Wicked Lady* and the latest Hollywood musical, with French and Russian masterpieces, and good American films like *The Southerner* going begging for a showing, the re-education of some part of cinema audiences is vital, and we believe that the best way to do it is through clubs like ours. This is not just idealistic dreaming, it can be accomplished. What about it Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh?

F.A. or f.a.?

By R. K. Neilson-Baxter

IT'S TIME we made up our minds.

Way back in '32, the constitution of the B.F.I. was laid down, and expressed as one of its aims was the influencing of "public opinion to appreciate the value of films as entertainment and instruction". We can only guess what happened. People talked about this aim and called it film appreciation, till one day someone wrote it down and lo! he wrote it "Film Appreciation"; and so apparently invested it with a mystical significance which has clothed it more or less adequately ever since. Few issues of SIGHT AND SOUND appear without an article on some aspect of the subject, though there seem to be a noteworthy number of variations in viewpoint. Should we then regard it as a controversial issue? Shall we "have it out"?

All right, then. What's it all about? Why is the inculcation of Film Appreciation into the minds of the young—and the not so young according to some of its advocates—considered so important? Is it the intellectuals who want to make something of it, or is there a wider purpose than is implied by an advocacy as limited as that?

As a start, we ought to try and assess the basis on which the appreciation of films is possible. Why do we make films? Go back to the bioscope days. Films were popular then because they were a novelty. Some of that novelty has never worn off. New tricks have kept it going—first sound, now colour,

perhaps tomorrow stereoscopy. But the chief attraction of the film is its ability to tell a story in the simplest and most easily understood medium—pictures, the recorded language which all of us grasp earliest in our lives. The film is the child's picture-book come to life.

The sophistication of the film is controlled by and has kept pace with the sophistication of its audience, with the result that present-day technical skill is capable of creating films which are of great influence, socially, culturally, emotionally, morally—but it isn't always the best influence. That's a bad thing, but the remedy also can surely only lie in the sophistication of the audience. So far so good. We have arrived at an excellent basis for arguing the importance of teaching film appreciation (or Film Appreciation).

Destroying Illusion

But how do we teach it? According to the rules of Film Appreciation, by treating the film as an Art-Form. As such it takes its place alongside music, painting, sculpture. Artistic appreciation can be taught by analytical and comparative methods, and the film-art is no exception. But just a minute. The appreciation of music, painting and the rest are invariably taught by specialists. Has anyone ever suggested that Film Appreciation should be taught by a specialist? On the contrary, school teachers and youth club leaders, with no more knowledge than is provided by a B.F.I. pamphlet, a little recommended reading and (dare one assume?) a visit to the cinema every so often, are to give "talks . . . on how films are made, e.g. the work of the director, cameraman, artistes, sound experts, the art director, script writers and others responsible for making it", and are expected to have "the sequence of processes by which a story is converted into a film clearly in mind". (The quotations are from "The Elements of Film Criticism", B.F.I. Pamphlet No. 46). These sort of ideas usually lead on to implications of careful shot-by-shot analyses by the unfortunate disciples of the films they see. "We started with films as entertainment," says Mr. Argent, "Later we experienced them as art. Finally we studied them." The eager pupil (I wonder how eager) must assess the effect of the music and the editing and the lighting and heaven knows what else. And he will, in the process, whether he likes it or not, completely destroy every shred of illusion which the film-makers have worked so hard to create. Can this be the right way to appreciate films?

But Others are Wiser

There are, however, some who appear to give a different meaning to the expression Film Appreciation—and they spell it with small letters. These are the people who are prepared to use film in school or club as a means to promote a critical attitude to life, environment and interests. Now, this starts to make sense. The film holds the truest of all mirrors up to nature. If, for example, America sends us picture after picture with stories based on the cash value of success, it is because that is the religion of America to-day. If Russia sends us *The New Teacher*, *Balkan Deputy* and *The Adventurers*, it is because they represent the way of thought and life in the U.S.S.R. Those are the things that give film its importance. The young men may sit in the ninepennies and whistle when the leading man kisses the leading lady. The girls may ape their favourite star. Young man and girl may go to the flicks for no more than "a bit o' dark" (and many provincial cinemas recognise it and thoughtfully provide double seats). But however frivolous their attitude may be, something of what they've seen sticks. It's *that* something we want to get at, because it's their appreciation of the *content* of the film.

Many of Film Appreciation's spon-

sors don't seem to realise that the wood wouldn't be a wood if it weren't for the trees. They see the form of a film and fail to see the significance of it, the id, the "thing" which that film carries from projector to screen to audience, each of whom interprets it according to his individual personality. The "thing" is conditioned by the form, but if you take time off to study the form you'll miss the "thing" altogether. Many pictures carry to their audiences a bad or at best tawdry "thing". We must assume, however, that the sponsors of both Film Appreciation and film appreciation will agree that film can be a useful medium and carry good "things". So it's obviously a retrogressive step to encourage an interest in the form rather than the content if it's the content that needs improving.

Anyone who is more interested in film technique as such, rather than in content, is welcome to make a special study of it and call it "Film Appreciation" or anything he likes. He can buy his viewing devices (remember Mr. Bulleid's "good *and well-arranged* magnifying glass"?) and work out the length of each cut if it makes him happy. He may analyse anything he pleases, but let's hope we don't meet him. Film technique can safely be left to the technicians. Criticise by all means—that's stimulating. But the only fair standard by which a film can be judged is in relation to its context —the when, the where and the why of its existence.

"Everything in this world is a product of social environment and its needs. The films in the cinemas are no exception. In fact they are a projection of the social system under which we live. Analysing the content of some of those films may help to develop that social sense which alone can change the world into a better place to live and work in."

I wrote that in a recent issue of *The Cine-Technician*. I can't say it any better.

I REMEMBER

Some Reminiscences from MATTHEW FREELAND

BEFORE Al Jolson, in *The Singing Fool*, set the whole film world "talking", many attempts had been made to add sound to the silent screen.

About 1911, an Edinburgh picture house showed a film dealing with the adventures of a white man and a Red Indian. As the story proceeded, an elocutionist, seated just beneath the screen in the place usually occupied at that time by the conductor of the orchestra, read out the narrative, which kept pace with the events above his head. As a novelty it was most interesting, and well I remember the excitement of the final scene when the white man, fleeing from the Indian, jumped across a great chasm, and the voice of the reader cried, "The white man leaps! He clears!" And as the Indian endeavoured to follow suit the voice continued, "The Indian leaps! And—MISSES!" The hair of our heads rose as we saw the pursuer jump short and catch hold of the edge of the abyss with the tips of his fingers.

Cowboy pictures were very popular about that time, and the firing of rifles and revolvers played a prominent part throughout these films. A touch of realism was added by blank shots being fired behind the screen, and was further enhanced by a strong smell of gunpowder. In some cinemas a boy usher would watch out for the parts where shooting scenes occurred, and at the appropriate moment would smack the leather seat of a chair by

means of a heavy cane. The resultant thud was an admirable imitation of a shot.

It was as far back as 1912 that the first attempts at mechanical synchronisation of vision with sound were made. That year I was in a picture house which had installed a gramophone that was worked in conjunction with the film, though the timing was dependent on the human element. The person in charge of the gramophone had to endeavour to keep his machine running at the same speed as a moving clock-hand which could be discerned turning round on one corner of the screen.

The film makers issued a record with each short film. I remember that this innovation was very successful. One picture showed a man bouncing a hard ball on a floor, and each time the ball struck we heard the sound instantaneously. Another, more ambitious, was of a lady singing "She's a Lassie fra Lancashire", and the movement of the lips and the sound of the words went together perfectly.

A great pioneer of talking pictures in Edinburgh was Mr. Poole (of Poole's Myriorama fame). For many years before Al Jolson told the world of his paternal devotion to Sonny Boy, the Synod Hall (hired as a picture house) had been the scene of many experiments to take the silence from the screen. Mr. Poole used to engage good artistes to do singing parts when such were called for on his films. One, I remember, was a story of the first Great War, in one part of which the heads of three Tommies emerged smilingly from a heap of débris in which a shell burst had buried them. The soldiers began to sing "Keep the Home Fires Burning", and it was a pleasant surprise to the audience actually to hear the words sung, even if they did not all accord with the lip movements.

Another novelty in this line which the Synod Hall introduced was a film of a piano-accordionist. He played a tune. By this time progress had been made with sound-track recording, and it was from loud speakers we heard the music. But Mr. Poole, ever full of initiative, had a surprise for us. The accordionist on the film asked the audience if there was any tune they would like him to play. Mr. Poole was seated in the auditorium. "Yes," he cried to the player on the screen, "play 'Annie Laurie'!" "Sorry, I don't know that one," replied the accordionist. Then Mr. Poole called up, "Do you know——," mentioning a topical song of the period. "Sure I do," came back the reply, and the song requested was then played.

At each visit to the Synod Hall the quality of the sound reproduction became better. I cannot forget my amazement at what I considered then to be the last word in talking-picture perfection. A film flashed on the screen. There in evening dress was the well-known figure of Mr. Poole himself. Then he spoke. It was thrilling. The man we knew so well was addressing us through the new medium. I remember part of his speech. He finished with, "and next week we shall present a talking-film of Graham Moffat and his company in 'A Scrape o' the Pen'." The "talkies" had arrived.

An extremely interesting paper on Sub-Standard Motion Picture Practice by I. D. Wratten, F.R.P.S., is among the contents of the "Proceedings of the Sub-Standards Division of the B.K.S." for their 1944–45 session.* Other articles deal with professional sub-standard projection, Screen Brightness in Sub-Standard Projection, American Standards for 16 mm. Service Projectors and Sound Recording for Sub-Standard films.

* *Proceedings of the Sub-Standards Division of the British Kinematograph Society*, Session 1944-1945. 5*s*., by post 5*s*. 3*d*., from the B.K.S., Dean House, 2 Dean Street, London, W.1.

FILM PROGRESS IN HASTINGS

By KENNETH L. THOMPSON

DURING the war years, two film clubs have been formed and developed by interested young people of Hastings. The G.I.B. Film Society, founded two days before war broke out by Mr. George Ivan Barnett, was formed for the purpose of establishing an amateur film production unit in the town. After preliminary experimental work on 9.5 mm., the club changed to 16 mm. and preparations were made for an ambitious sound film, *The Manor House*, in Kodachrome. This is now virtually finished and is a credit to the young people who worked tremendously hard. Beautifully photographed and well directed by G. Ivan Barnett, it is a notable achievement, as I was able to perceive for myself when I was invited to a private showing of the film recently. Miss Henson, assistant casting director at Ealing Studios, has seen the film, and I understand she was favourably impressed.

Medieval Story

The work was begun in May, 1944, the script being compiled by all members of the Society, and shooting commenced in August the same year and completed in December, 1945. The sound is yet to be recorded and synchronised but the mute copy I saw indicates the good quality of the effort.

Most of the exteriors were shot at Bodiam Castle, by permission of the National Trust, and at Alexandra Park, Hastings. The story concerns a party of tourists who are told the history of a tomb in an ancient manor house: the lord of the manor, returning from the Crusades, finds that a tyrannous baron has seized his mansion and lands and is striving to win his betrothed. Disguised as a minstrel, he enters the banquet hall and is unmasked by the baron, who is killed in the ensuing duel. The hero is afterwards killed by the baron's henchmen and the heroine weeps over his body.

The Society has, however, made a good film out of a simple story which lends itself perfectly to colour. The music, too, has been suitably arranged and adds great effect to the production.

Plans are already being made for their next production—an original treatment of the story of the famous "Lovers' Seat" at Hastings, which will form part of next year's programme. A short surrealistic film is also contemplated.

Repertory Film Society

The Repertory Film Society at Hastings Youth Centre was formed in May last year, its object being solely for the exhibition of silent "classics". Many of the films available from the loan section of the National Film Library have already been shown, together with others on 9.5 mm. These have included *The Battleship Potemkin*, *The General Line*, *The Ghost that Never Returns*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Metropolis*, *La Bête Humaine* (with *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* in the same programme), *La Maternelle* and *Grass*. Discussions, brains trusts and other similar activities have also been held, and on one occasion the Education Group of the Hastings and St. Leonards Civic Society visited the Centre for a programme of documentary films together with Ruttmann's *Berlin*.

Arrangements are being made between the local Young Citizens' Institute and the Society for occasional film shows at the Institute and thus it is hoped that film appreciation will be carried to yet more of the town's young people.

They Built a Cathedral

A Thought by STANLEY SCHOFIELD

IN THESE days when one's mind is filled, perhaps too much, with present-day deeds and happenings it is well to reflect on the significance of the rich heritage that has been left to us by our forefathers, especially the architectural masterpieces most of which, in this country at any rate, appear to have been spared the ravages of war. Their creation is a memorial to the devoted and seemingly inspired craftsmen of a bygone age, an example of an art that was collective in the fullest meaning of the word. The priests or brothers of a holy order worked and planned with master builders who, together with artists and craftsmen toiled for generations in erecting and beautifying an edifice which became a memorial to their united efforts and inspirations. In this way, the building of the Gothic cathedrals is stated to be one of the finest examples of collective art for they reveal the craftsmanship of many trades which have been united to create a work of art of sheer beauty that even to-day cannot be surpassed.

Surely the production of a film is a further example of collective art for the resemblance between the building of a cathedral and the production of a film is too striking to be ignored. The inspiration is derived from an event or thought and the master builder, this time the producer, calls in the master craftsman, in our case the script writer, and they work together to prepare the plans or script. When this has been finally agreed the craftsmen, given a limited freedom, work in the various arts and crafts.

It is interesting to reflect to what extent the production of a successful film is influenced by the artist. The designers of the sets and costumes, the model makers, the scenic artists, all play their part in designing and constructing the settings for the film, while an appreciation of good composition and a sense of massing tone and textures is essential to the cameraman and director. What of the training of these artists? They cannot be trained in the same way as technicians by intensive swotting, they must have been provided with an early art training and thus given a sound cultural background to their outlook and a sense of fitness for purpose. In these days when one reads so much about the training of technicians for the film industry, one would do well to reflect on the importance of the artist in an industry which has now become part of our national life. The designer of machine-made pictures, still and moving, requires training different from but allied to the training given to picture makers of all periods. This can be done by a well organised course in a suitable art school.

In these enlightened days one is unconsciously trained to value more and more the aesthetic qualities of the film and of the debt that we owe to the artist. The growing appreciation of well-designed films among widening circles is a welcome feature of present-day enlightenment that must not be ignored if British film producers are to make films that will appeal to the discriminating audiences of the future. Perfect reproduction of tone, critical definition and faithful sound reproduction are not in themselves sufficient to create a masterpiece. It must share with the older arts the power of heightening and purging the emotions.

The Africa Motion Picture Project

SHORTLY BEFORE the war an expedition sponsored by some of the American missionary Societies went to Africa to take films. This was known as the Africa Motion Picture Project and, as a result, a number of quite useful films were added to the American lists. It is hoped that some of these may become available in this country in the near future. Meanwhile, the Rev. William Rogers who is Executive Secretary of the Religious Films Association of America and who was in charge of production with Dr. Emery Ross as Director of the Africa Motion Picture Project, has sent us some information part of which we think may be of interest to those concerned with making films in the Societies.

We quote from the Rev. William Rogers' letter . . . "In preparing to write the scripts we did a good deal of reading on Africa which we supplemented by interviews with African missionaries in this country. From the latter we picked up chiefly anecdotes and stories of African customs which we thought might be especially interesting to people at home. These were woven into our story films so that in effect the stories were typical of Africa and true to the life of the people.

"All scripts were studied by our advisory committee and by missionaries recently returned from the field before they were submitted to the photographer. They were as detailed as possible but allowed the photographer a certain amount of leeway to adapt them to local situations. The "local adaptations" in some measure caused the films to run longer than originally estimated.

"Our photographer spent about a year in Africa—we had expected him to finish in approximately six months. There were delays due to unfavourable weather and in finding time acceptable to missionaries on the field who were needed to help supervise, appear in films, etc.

"The film allotted to the photographer was figured on the basis of 1200 feet of film to each 400 foot reel planned for final production. This seemed to be sufficient.

"The photographer was equipped with reflectors. Two small ones were made of painted composition board. Another fairly large one was made of white cloth. These proved very helpful. However, to photograph interiors of native houses it was necessary to remove the roof.

"Exposure factors varied in different parts of the continent. In most cases the film required greater exposure than would ordinarily seem to be indicated. We had the photographer rush test shots to us. We cabled him the results. I believe this was fairly important.

"In most cases the Africans seemed to be natural born actors. Aside from the language problem they did not seem to require more rehearsing than we would have in this country—if as much.

"All films were shot on 16 mm. reversal stock. Only extremely rough cuts were made on this original film. Duplicate negatives were then made and prints from this negative were edited and the negative matched with this. In a few cases a duplicate reversal print was made and edited, the original matched with it, and a negative was then made which contained no splices. This latter system seemed preferable though somewhat more expensive."

Notes & News

Will Film Societies please note that copy should reach this office not later than the 1st of January, April, July and October, for publication in the following issue. Copy should be as short as possible.

Film Appreciation Courses at Exeter

On behalf of Exeter Education Committee, Mr. Stuart Keen is conducting a Film Appreciation Course extending over 24 weeks, from September to March. The Course is proving so popular that the Committee have decided to extend it to two other Centres, making three classes each week. With the co-operation of the British Film Institute, Mr. Keen is able to offer an extensive and detailed study of the History of Cinema from its earliest beginnings to the present day. Many classics are being screened to illustrate the lectures, e.g. *Shoulder Arms*, *Dr. Caligari*, *Siegfried*, *Cinderella*, *Last Laugh*, *Metropolis*, *Battleship Potemkin*, *Covered Wagon*, *Italian Straw Hat*, *White Hell of Pitz Palu* (synchronised), *Kameradschaft*, *Blue Angel*, *Man of Aran*, *The Cheat*, *South Riding*, and Documentaries will include *Nanook of the North*, *Grass*, *Song of Ceylon*, *The River*, and *Mor Vran*. A notable feature of the classes is the enthusiasm of students, displayed by numerous questions and free discussion.

Architectural Association Film Society

This Society was started by the students last September and already has a membership of 180. Programmes so far are confined to 16 mm. Programmes for the autumn and spring terms include: *Caligari*, *The Prizefighter* (Chaplin), *The Great Train Robbery*, *M*, *Potemkin*, *End of St. Petersburg*, and *The Road to Life*. Enquiries are welcomed and should be addressed to the Chairman, Hugh Owen, care of Film Society, 34 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.

Beckenham Film Society

The Beckenham Film Society started in spring, 1945, with a trial run of four evenings, and has now a membership of about 145, holding fortnightly meetings in the hall of the public library, by permission of the Libraries Committee of the Beckenham Town Council. The President is Mr. John Cole, head of the Kent County Art School, Beckenham, and a feature has been a discussion on the films shown at every meeting.

Birmingham Film Society

After several years forced inactivity, the Birmingham Film Society held an (uncompleted) season of three meetings from November, 1944, to January, 1945, showing *Journal de la Résistance*, *The Virtuous Isidore*, *Dood Water* and *Battle for Music*.

Membership rose to 649 before the second half of the season was cancelled by the Committee on account of unsatisfactory projection at the hall used (no suitable cinema being available at convenient times). The same difficulty has so far prevented the presentation of any programme this season; but preparations are well advanced for a monthly *Birmingham Film Guide* on a subscription basis, to supply news and criticism of all interesting films to be shown locally, and of other allied activities. It is hoped that the *Guide*, besides keeping the Society in being during a difficult period, will prove to fill a permanent need.

Cheltenham Film Society

The New Year opened with a full house at the School of Art, with the sub-standard screening of *La Bete Humaine*. Overcoming the usual difficulties, cinema accommodation, the Society has one standard screening a month at the Coliseum Cinema. Among the films to be shown in the next four months are *A Night at the Opera*, *Un Carnet de Bal*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Le Dernier Milliadaire*. At the moment there is a great need for larger premises, the sub-standard shows are overcrowded, but it is hoped that by next season we will be using the Cheltenham Civic Playhouse for 16 mm. shows.

The forthcoming films at the School of Art are: *Battleship Potemkin*, *The Lady Vanishes*, *Film and Reality*, *The Stars Look Down*, *Man of Aran*, *The Blue Angel*, *Spanish Earth*, and *49th Parallel*.

In due course a series of lectures, discussions and exhibitions are to be held at the Town Hall in connection with the Cheltenham Cultural Council.

The Society was formed in April, 1945, and the membership now stands at 640, up to January 8th, 1946. The Hon. Secretary will be glad to exchange programmes with other film societies.

Enquiries should be addressed to The Secretary, C.F.S. School of Art, St. Margaret's Road, Cheltenham. (Tel. 4639.)

Chester Film Society

In spite of fluctuations in population membership of the Society has remained steady though small. Difficulties have been experienced with Customs and Excise, who have refused to exempt *L'Homme qui Cherché la Vérité*. Nevertheless the film was shown.

Bookings for the second half of the season are not yet complete, but *Adventures in Bokhara* and *La Fin du Jour* will be shown. If available it is also hoped to show *Birth of a Nation*.

The usual children's performances are also being arranged.

The New Film Society, Colwyn Bay

The New Film Society entered on its fourth season in October with a foreboding that this would be its last. The majority of its members are civil servants attached to the Ministries evacuated to Llandudno and Colwyn Bay, and the return, actual or hoped for, of evacuated staff to London has had a serious effect on membership. This season's numbers have fallen from the 1944-45 figure of just over 700 to about 400.

However a series of eight programmes was arranged and the films already shown have been: October 14th—*Le Dernier Milliardaire*, supported by *The New Earth* and *Princess Kaguya*; November 4th—*Hortobagy*, with *High Over the Border*, *Voyage Across the Impossible*, and *The Mascot*; November 25th—*Little Humpback Horse*, with *Happy Times and Jolly Moments*, and *North Sea*; December 16th—*Derrière la Façade*, with *Song of Ceylon* and *People's Land*.

The main films of the forthcoming programmes are: Jan. 13th—*My Universities*; Jan. 27th—*Grapes of Wrath*; Feb. 17th—*M*; March 10th—*Adventures in Bokhara*.

It is perhaps not out of place to mention that half-way through this season the Society's chairman, Mr. C. A. le M. Irving, was compelled to resign. The New Film Society owes more to Mr. Irving than to any other one individual, and the Committee and members alike wish to put on record their thanks and appreciation for all he has done in starting and helping to carry on this wartime venture in Colwyn Bay.

Dundee Film Society

Our Society's feature films during the first half of the season were *Le Bonheur*, *Le Dernier Tournant*, *Lone White Sail*, *L'Homme qui Cherché la Vérité* and *Adventures in Bokhara*. The first two films were not found to be of the usual high standard one expects from France while, on the other hand, *Lone White Sail* was more popular than any other Russian film yet shown. Shorts included *Malta Convoy*, *Song of Ceylon*, *Cambridge*, *Battle of Russia* and *World of Plenty*, all of which were most successful.

The Dundee Society has sponsored a Scientific Film Society which is commencing its activities within a week or two. We have also helped to get a Society under way in Perth and it already has a large membership and is no longer in need of assistance from us.

The Hon. Secretary, J. Gordon Colquhoun, 48 Faringdon Street, Dundee, will be glad to exchange programmes with other Societies.

Farnborough Scientific Film Society Farnborough and R.A.E. Film Society

The two film societies in Farnborough, Hants, work in close collaboration and are fortunate in being able to use a common committee, equipment, hall and projectionist. There is, however, a secretary and treasurer for each society. In this way we feel that we can go to greater extremes in the range of films covered without making apologies to a mixed audience. Each society holds monthly performances and film shows are arranged to occur fortnightly.

The Scientific Film Society is now in its third season. We aim to show films on a wide range of subjects covering Agriculture, Botany, Health and Food, Technology, Sociology, Zoology, etc., in order to present a broad view of scientific effort to its members, who are largely specialist scientists and engineers, in a concise and pleasant manner rather than to instruct them in their own subjects. Whenever possible we endeavour to get a qualified speaker to introduce one or more films in a programme and have been honoured recently by visits from Mr. Geoffrey Bell and Mr. Forsyth Hardy, adding greatly to the interest of the shows. Among the recent films shown are *The Proud City*, *Surgery in Chest Diseases*, *Pest Control*, and *The Story of D.D.T.* In the near future we hope to include in our programmes *Neuropsychiatry*, *In the Sands of Asia*, *Penicillin* and *This is Colour*, etc. Much of the yeoman work of forming and building up the Society is due to the activities of the past

secretary, Mr. E. W. Simon, who has recently resigned on leaving the district; probably soon to start a new society or augment an existing one.

The new Secretary is Mr. P. J. Bateman, Farnborough Grange Hostel, Hawley Lane, Farnborough, from whom information on the Sociey may be obtained.

The Farnborough and R.A.E. Film Society has continued to try to show its members a wide range of feature film subjects, together with shots of particular interest. Our programmes generally consist of one full length film together with two or more shorts.

We usually have an audience of about 450 at each performance, of which roughly 100 are guests. This is in spite of our low membership fee, 6*s*. for the season of eight shows.

Some of the feature films exhibited include *Thunder over Mexico*, *The Avalanche*, *La Bête Humaine*, *La Kermesse Heroïque*, and *Film and Reality*. Shorts have included *The Mascot*, *Le Journal de la Resistance*, *The Birth of* the *Robot* and *Rainbow Dance*.

We hope in the future to include Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* and *Vredens Dag*, if it is available in time. In this connection we should like to put on record our gratitude to the Federation of English and Welsh Film Societies for the considerable assistance given in the booking of films.

Much interesting information has been received from other film societies through the Federation. Visitors to Farnborough from all film societies would always be welcome at our shows, and should contact the Secretary, Mr. P. M. Plaskitt, Farnborough Grange Hostel, Farnborough, Hants.

We normally project on 35 mm. stock. 16 mm. shows are given only when we are unable to obtain a 35 mm. copy of the film in question. Much of the success of our performances is due to the skill of our projectionist, Mr. Newton, whose untiring efforts always secure a first-class exhibition.

Highbury Theatre Film Group

This group, which is associated with the Highbury Little Theatre, Sutton Coldfield, is now in the middle of its third season. Five Sunday meetings are held during the winter months, two performances of each programme being given. This is necessary since the seating capacity of the theatre is only 110 and the present membership stands at 195. The shows have to be given on 16 mm. at present, but a high standard of presentation is maintained; luxurious seating, screen tabs, lighting and a proper projection box all contribute to this.

During the first two seasons such films as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *The General Line*, *Roman d'un Tricheur*, *La Femme du Boulanger* and *L'Atlantide* have been presented, together with documentary and experimental short films. This season *La Bête Humaine*, *Lone White Sail* and *A Day in Soviet Russia* have been shown, and *M* and *Elephant Boy* are booked for the latter part.

In addition to these shows a course on Film Appreciation has just started. This comprises a series of eight weekly lectures and demonstrations given by the Group Director, Mr. Basil Harley, and Mr. Frank Pardoe. The lectures cover the mechanical basis of the cinema, the grammar and the development of the film, and the elements of film appreciation. The animated film and the documentary will also be dealt with, and Mr. E. S. Tompkins is to contribute a lecture on colour. The course has already aroused a gratifying amount of interest both within and outside the Group.

Hull and District Film Society

This Society was only founded on September 28th, 1945, and gave its first show at the Tivoli Theatre, Hull, on December 2nd, 1945. Opening with *Carnet de Bal*, the audience numbered close on 450. The film was very entertaining and the expressions of congratulation afterwards testified to the gratification of a very critical audience.

Mr. Sydney Thompson, the booking agent for the Society, has set himself a high standard, and the remainder of the season will see presented *The Student of Prague* (German sound version), *L'Homme qui Cherché la Vérité*, *Citizen Kane*, and *Hortobagy*, and finally *Adventures in Bokhara*. One show per month at present.

The Society started late in its quest for films and hopes to have next season's bookings early. So far very little literature has been put out and again it is hoped to remedy this in the future.

The membership is now 424 and still growing. The President of the Society is Mr. S. I. Hemming, the treasurer Mr. H. Allman, and the secretary, Mr. A. Leaper. We have been told we are filling a gap in the cultural life of Hull and to justify that position will be our constant aim.

Irish Film Society

The Society is now half-way through what promises to be a most successful season. The Dublin branch membership is now over a thousand—the highest in its ten years' existence.

Interesting developments are the formation of a special Sub-standard Projection Committee, whose main object is to provide a mobile show service which will bring the film society movement and all it

stands for to the small towns and villages; and the first of a series of special Farmers' Film Shows organised by our Portlaoighise branch and the County Committee of Agriculture, which a local newspaper headlined as "a rousing success". The films shown were *Winter on the Farm, Clean Milk, Mastitis, Re-seeding for Better Grass,* and *Crofters,* and were followed closely by a packed house.

Our programmes are published as an eight-page magazine containing articles of film society interest, and we will be glad to exchange programmes and views with other Societies. We find that our files of society programmes form an invaluable reference library for programme selection. Write to Peter G. Sherry, hon. secretary, Irish Film Society, 5 North Earl Street, Dublin.

Letchworth Film Society

Honorary Chairman, Dr. R. G. Hodder. Monthly shows to be given this winter on 16 mm. First programme, 20th January: *Drawings that Walk and Talk, Nanook of the North, Night Mail.* The shows will be given in a comfortably warmed hall, and we hope to have a speaker and make the affair a social occasion. As we have many factories here it is intended to give also special shows of engineering films. We have asked for a licence to show standard films in the local cinema, which is closed on Sundays. Unfortunately the Licences Committee of the Herts County Council refuse to issue an occasional licence. If they licence the cinema for Sundays they want it to be opened to the public. We shall be interested to hear from other societies similarly obstructed.

Lincoln W.E.A. Film Society

An active film society has recently been formed in Lincoln, under the auspices of the local branch of the W.E.A. The first general meeting was held on June 20th, 1945; the constitution was agreed, and a committee elected, consisting of Messrs. W. Howard (chairman), Arthur Bartlett (secretary), G. Ulyat (treasurer), H. I. Walters, Dr. Allan H. Briggs and Dr. G. W. Morey.

The Society has been very fortunate in having the generous co-operation of Dr. Morey, who has kindly placed his 16 mm. sound projection apparatus at the disposal of the Society for its meetings, and has given his services as projectionist. He has also been able to procure for showing to the society a number of films of special interest, and has made use of his own personal film library.

On September 22nd, 1945, the Society was honoured by a special visit from Dr. Roger Manvell, who delivered a lecture on "How we get our films and the films we get". After tea, the composite film *Film and Reality* was shown, with a brief introduction by Dr. Manvell. This lecture was greatly appreciated, and there was a long and interesting discussion afterwards.

There have been four ordinary meetings of the Society at which the following feature films have been presented: *The Italian Straw Hat, The White Hell of Pitz Palu, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,* and *The Battleship Potemkin.* In each case there have been suitable short supporting films. A programme of four further meetings is in course of preparation for the remaining period of the first year of the Society's activities. So far the membership of the Society has been limited to 200 owing to the difficulty of procuring a suitable hall for showing films to a larger number. There is now a waiting list for membership, and efforts are being made to find more commodious premises. So far no means by which 35 mm. films can be shown has been found, but it is hoped this step will eventually prove possible.

A very successful children's show was given during the Christmas period, for the children of members, and their friends. It was much appreciated, and it is hoped to make this a regular feature of the future programme.

T.R.E. Film Society, Malvern

This Society holds regular fortnightly meetings and is fortunate in the possession of two 35 mm. sound projectors. Films arranged for the next quarter include *South Riding,* the *Canadian Folk Songs* series, *Sous les Toits de Paris, Toscanini, My Man Godfrey,* and a programme of old films, including *Simple Charity* (Mary Pickford) and *The New Janitor* (Chaplin).

Marlborough College Film Society

This has been our first season. During the past year we have been able to show the following films to audiences of about 800 at the local cinema theatre: *Double Indemnity, Pygmalion, Madame Curie, La Kermesse Héroïque* and *Henry V.*

Moseley (Birmingham) Grammar School Film Society

This Society began its career in January, 1945, with a 16 mm. silent projector and has continued this winter with a 16 mm. sound projector. Films shown so far include *Song of Ceylon, Night Mail* and *The Lady Vanishes.* Future bookings include *Nanook of the North, Forty-ninth Parallel, Valley of the Tennessee* and *World of Plenty.*

Membership is restricted to boys in the Vth and VIth forms, giving an age range of

about 15½ to 18. A critical attitude is encouraged, and points are discussed, though we try not to be priggish over this. Each meeting is presided over by a boy who presents the programme, adding contributions of his own, verbal or otherwise. Projection is done very competently by two boys.

Although we are still groping our way one already feels that a Film Society has many possibilities as an educational factor.

Norwich Film Society

The Society has made arrangements for Paul Rotha to give an illustrated public lecture in Norwich in March, and we hope also to present a series of 16 mm. shows illustrating the early history of the cinema.

The programmes of the sixth session will be as follows: April 28th—*Le Jour se Lève, Night Mail, Drame chez les Fantoches*; May 19th—*Dood Water, Magie du Fer-Blanc, Birth of a Robot*; June 16th—*Ils étaient neuf celibataires, Carmen.* The Secretary, care of The Regal Cinema, Norwich, will be pleased to receive applications for guest tickets from any members of other societies who may happen to be in East Anglia.

Nottingham and District Film Society

The first term of the work on the Nottingham Film Society has been remarkably successful and has shown the great need for such an organisation in this district. Owing to the limited accommodation at the News Theatre little advertising to increase membership has been undertaken, but already subscriptions have reached £250 and arrangements will be necessary in the future to ensure more seats for members.

The following films have been seen in 35 mm. size: *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki, T.V.A., Citizen Kane, Welcome to Britain, The City, Market Town,* and in the early months of 1946 we are looking forward to *La Kermesse Heroïque, The Great Mr. Handel, Strange Incident, Night Mail, Papageno, Chinese in Britain.*

The Secretary of the Society, Mr. W. L. Sumner, gave a most successful lecture on November 18th at the Gas Theatre, Nottingham, on "The Science and Art of the Film". This was illustrated with various 16 mm. films including parts of Cavalcanti's *The Film and Reality.* In 1946 there will be 16 mm. shows of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The Battleship Potemkin, The Birth of a Nation,* and various Chaplin shorts. Short explanatory introductions are to be given by the secretary and suitable gramophone music will accompany the films.

With the whole-hearted support of the local directors of education a junior film society is to be formed in response to considerable public demand. The lease of one of the Nottingham cinemas is the property of the Education Committee, and it is suggested that ultimately this should be worked on a full-time basis for educational purposes only. Clearly very interesting developments are possible along these lines.

Percival Guildhouse, Rugby

Among the film programmes of this Adult Education centre have been seen: *Of Mice and Men, Henry VIII, Blue Angel,* and programmes of documentaries and new cartoons. In the Spring Term will be seen *Russian Story, Warning Shadows, War is Hell* and *The Ghost That Never Returns* as feature films, and documentaries on Sundays will include *Our Country, Tschierva Hut, Children Must Laugh. Chants Populaires* will also be available through the kindness of the National Film Board of Canada. A course of 24 lectures on the Art and Social Influence of the Cinema will also begin in January.

S.A.M.A. Film Group

The initials S.A.M.A. stand for the Society for the Advancement of Music and the Arts. It operates in Worcester and is one, believed to be the first, of the organisations which sprang up during the war to do locally what C.E.M.A. was doing nationally. It worked in conjunction with C.E.M.A. and continues to do so with the Arts Council of Great Britain. It works through various groups and to its already established Music, Theatre and Youth Drama Groups it added, in 1945, a Film Group. The immediate aim was to do the work normally done by Film Societies, but eventually it is hoped to do practical work in compiling a documentary of local developments and possibly some feature work in collaboration with the Theatre Group.

At first it was only possible to show 16 mm. films and regular monthly meetings were held when such films as *Man of Aran, Film and Reality, Potemkin, Rembrandt, La Marseillaise* and *The Cheat* were shown as features, and *Power for the Highlands, Highland Doctor, New Earth* and *The Silent Village* as documentaries. But the quality of production with 16 mm. films was not to our complete satisfaction, largely because we could not always be sure of getting a hall of the right type—long, low and narrow—to give good sound reproduction. So, by tactful diplomacy, contact was established with the proprietors of the only cinema in the city not opening on Sunday evenings. They were most considerate and arrangements were made to hold a trial show on a Sunday evening in early December.

The programme arranged was *O'er Hill and Dale, The Pumkin Race* and *Un Carnet de Bal.* Subscription tickets were quickly taken up and a successful performance was attended by over 500. One-half of the programme was devoted to a questionnaire asking patrons for their views and support if regular shows could be arranged in the cinema. Already sufficient replies have been received to justify the venture, and the outcome of further negotiations with the cinema proprietors is eagerly awaited.

Tredegar and District Film Society

Since the last report three Sunday performances have been held at which the following films were shown: *Magic Fish, Adventures in Bokhara, Spanish Fiesta, Roman d'un Tricheur* and *Film and Reality.* Films to be shown in the near future include *Mor Vran, Maskerade, Message from Canterbury, Fantasia, The City* and *Le Jour se Lève.*

In addition two very interesting film shows have been organised by the Ministry of Information.

Watford Film Society

This is a newly-formed Society which was inaugurated in July last year, and held its first general meeting in October. The season opened with a British film, *The Man Who Knew Too Much,* and is continuing with America's *Citizen Kane,* followed by French, German, and Russian films. It has, of course, a wide field to choose from in its first year, and is giving as much variety as possible by showing fiction and documentary, old and new, British and foreign. Thanks to the co-operation of the Empire Cinema the Society is able to show 35 mm. films every other month, the intermediate shows being on 16 mm. projectors. The Society is also arranging talks and debates from time to time.

Another branch of its activities is monthly *public* discussions and reviews on films shown in local cinemas, which are combined with short film shows of recent M.O.I. documentaries.

Stimulation of local interest has been helped by a series of lectures on the cinema arranged by the Watford Education Committee in November, when the public were able to hear Roger Manvell, John Croydon, Ernest Lindgren, and Oliver Bell.

Although membership is small at present, it is hoped this will expand rapidly. All enquiries will be welcomed by Mrs. K. Cooper, 31 Devereux Drive, Watford, who is Acting Secretary in place of Miss Lydon, who has unfortunately had to resign.

The Workers' Film Association

On Wednesday, January 9th, the annual meeting of the Workers' Film Association was held at Transport House, The Secretary, Alderman Joseph Reeves, M.P., in presenting his report, was able to announce a turnover of £18,457 12*s.* 7*d.*, which was more than twice the amount of the previous year.

This satisfactory result was brought about by a considerable increase in the sales of equipment which together with the film shows provided by a fleet of mobile cine-units amounted to no less a sum than £13,632 11*s.* 2*d.* The balance revealed a surplus of £714 14*s.* 11*d.*, which the members considered to be satisfactory especially in view of the fact that the sum of £1,179 10*s.* has been expended in providing a library of silent films which was at the disposal of members at nominal charges to cover the handling and cleaning of films, and which has not appeared in the balance sheet as an asset in view of the non-commercial character of the purchase.

A new catalogue of 28 pages has been issued which with advertisements would pay for itself. Production of films had lagged behind because of difficulties in obtaining facilities for processing films but hopes were expressed that the two films now at the laboratories would be completed soon. During the year 772 film shows were provided for members by our mobile cine-outfits and 12,131 reels of films distributed. He was able to report that negotiations were now being conducted with successful prospects with the Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd., and the Co-operative Union Ltd., for the formation of a national film organisation which would undertake film production, distribution and exhibition on behalf of the Co-operative, Trade Union and Political Labour Movement.

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